

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A reclosable package containing sliced bacon, comprising:
a generally rigid tray member having a tray base, generally upstanding tray sidewalls, and generally upstanding tray endwalls, and a tray member peripheral flange which surrounds an open mouth generally opposite the tray base, wherein the tray base comprises a generally flat central base portion having a maximum width defined by the distance between the tray endwalls and disposed between two continuous inclined base portions on first opposing sides of the central base portion ~~which merge, each inclined base portion merging with one of~~ the generally upstanding tray sidewalls at respective locations below the tray member peripheral flange and second opposing sides of the central base portion which intersect the generally upstanding tray sidewalls at respective locations below the tray member peripheral flange, the two inclined base portions each having a maximum width ~~less than a~~ of about 50 to about 80% of the maximum width of the central base portion such that the second opposing sides of the central base portion are disposed between the tray endwalls and the inclined base portions, and a peripheral ledge portion extends along an inner surface of the sidewalls and endwalls adjacent the mouth of the tray member; and
a shingled stack of sliced bacon disposed within the tray member;
a generally rigid cover member securable onto the tray member, the cover member including a cover panel, a cover member peripheral flange, and a peripheral inset portion joining and spacing the cover panel and the cover member peripheral flange;

wherein:

the cover member peripheral inset portion slidably engages the tray member peripheral ledge portion, wherein the cover panel and tray base define an interior volume for enclosing the stack of shingled bacon supported on the tray base when the cover member peripheral flange is seated on the tray member peripheral flange,

the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of projections or indentations releasably engageable with indentations or projections on the tray member peripheral ledge portion, and

at least one of the cover member and tray member having transparency to permit visible inspection therethrough of the sliced bacon enclosed within the package.

2. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the package has transparency to permit visible inspection therethrough of at least about 70% of a sliced bacon strip within the package.

3. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the tray member comprises transparent plastic.

4. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the tray member comprises opaque plastic.

5. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the tray member and cover member both comprise transparent plastic.

6. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of ribs releasably engageable with grooves on the tray member peripheral ledge portion.

7. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of ribs which are releasably engageable with a plurality of respective grooves located on the tray member peripheral ledge portion along opposite endwalls and opposite sidewalls of the tray member.

8. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of ribs which are releasably engageable with a plurality of respective grooves located on the tray member peripheral ledge portion along either opposite endwalls or opposite sidewalls of the tray member.

9. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of ribs which are releasably engageable with a plurality of respective grooves located on the tray member peripheral ledge portion at corners of the tray member.

10. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the inclined base portions individually have respective inclination angles in the range from about 20 to about 40 degrees.

11. (Previously Presented) The reclosable package of claim 10, wherein the inclination angle of one of the inclined base portions is about 3 to about 10 degrees less than the inclination angle of the other inclined base portion, wherein a shingled bacon slice located above the base portion having the lesser inclination angle has increased surface area visible compared to a shingled bacon slice located above the other inclined base portion.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the tray member and cover member are heat-sealed together between the cover member peripheral flange and the tray member peripheral flange.

14. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member and tray member independently comprise a moldable or thermoformable construction material selected from the group consisting of homogenous plastic film, heat sealable-coated plastic film, multi-layered film laminates, and co-extruded films, or combinations thereof.

15. (Currently Amended) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the cover member comprises a thermoformed transparent multi-layered plastic film construction including at least (a) a thin, intermediate layer which is substantially impervious to oxygen, in combination with (b) an outer structural layer having sufficient structural characteristics so that the plastic film is sufficiently rigid for shape retention during handling, and usage of [[the]] integral snap-fit closure features included with the package, and (c) a sealant layer suitable for heat sealing procedures.

16. (Currently Amended) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the tray member comprises a thermoformed multi-layered plastic film construction including at least (a) a thin, intermediate layer which is substantially impervious to oxygen, in combination with (b) an outer structural layer having sufficient structural characteristics so that the plastic film is sufficiently rigid for shape retention during handling, and usage of [[the]] integral snap-fit closure features included with the package, and (c) a sealant layer suitable for heat sealing procedures.

17. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 16, wherein the outer structural layer comprises a colored or opaque plastic material.

18. (Original) The reclosable package of claim 16, wherein the sealant layer comprises a multi-film sealant construction having a rupturable interface.

19. (Currently Amended) A reclosable package for foodstuffs, comprising:
a generally rigid tray member having a tray base, generally upstanding tray sidewalls, and generally upstanding tray endwalls, and a tray member peripheral flange which surrounds an open mouth generally opposite the tray base, wherein the tray base comprises a generally flat central base portion having a maximum width defined by the distance between the tray endwalls with two inclined base portions extending from the central base portion which merge, each inclined base portion merging with one of the generally upstanding tray sidewalls at respective locations below the tray member peripheral flange, and a peripheral ledge portion extends along inner surface of the sidewalls and endwalls adjacent the mouth of the tray member, the two inclined base portions each having a maximum width less than a of about 50 to about 80% of the maximum width of the central base portion such that side regions of the central base portion are disposed between the tray endwalls and the inclined base portions; and

a generally rigid cover member securable onto the tray member, the cover member including a cover panel, a cover member peripheral flange, and a peripheral inset portion joining and spacing the cover panel and the cover member peripheral flange;

wherein:

the cover member peripheral inset portion slidably engages the tray member peripheral ledge portion, wherein the cover panel and tray base define an interior volume sufficient for enclosing foodstuffs supported on the tray base when the cover member peripheral flange is seated on the tray member peripheral flange,

the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of projections or indentations releasably engageable with indentations or projections on the tray member peripheral ledge portion, and

at least one of the cover member and tray member having transparency to permit visible inspection therethrough of the foodstuffs enclosed within the package.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for packing shingled bacon slices using a reclosable package, comprising:

providing packaging components including:

a generally rigid tray member having a tray base, generally upstanding tray sidewalls, and generally upstanding tray endwalls, and a tray member peripheral flange which surrounds an open mouth generally opposite the tray base, wherein the tray base comprises a generally flat central base portion having a maximum width defined by the distance between the tray endwalls and disposed between two inclined base portions on first opposing sides of the central base portion ~~which merge, each inclined base portion having a maximum width defined between first and second inclined base portion sidewalls and merging~~ with one of the generally upstanding tray sidewalls at respective locations below the tray member peripheral flange and second and third opposing sides of the central base portion which intersect the generally upstanding tray sidewalls at respective locations below the tray member peripheral flange, the two inclined base portions having a maximum width less than a maximum width of the central base portion such that the second opposing sides of the central base portion are disposed between one of the tray endwalls and the first inclined base portion sidewalls ~~inclined base portions, the third opposing sides of the central base portion are disposed between the other of the tray endwalls and the second inclined base portion sidewalls~~, and a peripheral ledge portion extends along an inner surface of the sidewalls and endwalls adjacent the mouth of the tray member;

a generally rigid cover member securable onto the tray member, the cover member including a cover panel, a cover member peripheral flange, and a peripheral inset portion joining and spacing the cover panel and the cover member peripheral flange;

wherein:

the cover member peripheral inset portion slidably engages the tray member peripheral ledge portion, wherein the cover panel and tray base define an interior volume for enclosing a stack of shingled bacon supported on the tray base when the cover member peripheral flange is seated on the tray member peripheral flange,

the cover member peripheral inset portion includes a plurality of projections or indentations releasably engageable with indentations or projections on the tray member peripheral ledge portion, and

at least one of the cover member and tray member having transparency to permit visible inspection therethrough of sliced bacon when enclosed within the package;

introducing shingled bacon slices into the rigid tray member as supported on the tray base;

optionally flushing the tray member and enclosed shingled bacon slices with inert gas; and,

covering the tray member with the cover member in a sealed manner.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein covering the tray member with the cover member in a sealed manner comprises:

seating the cover member peripheral flange on the tray member peripheral flange; and
heat-sealing the cover member peripheral flange to the tray member peripheral flange.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the providing of the packaging components comprises separately thermoforming the tray member and the cover member.

23. - 25. (Canceled)

26. (New) The reclosable package of claim 1, wherein the second opposing sides of the central base portion are approximately level with the central base portion.

27. (New) The reclosable package of claim 19, wherein the side regions of the central base portion are approximately level with the central base portion.

28. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the second and third opposing sides of the central base portion are approximately level with the central base portion.